



CHICAGO, IL (April 19th, 2018) - Better Business Bureau serving Chicago and Northern Illinois is warning consumers again to use caution when dealing with First Marshall Auto Auction LLC, located at 398 E. 147th Street in Harvey IL.

First Marshall Auto Auction currently has an "F" rating with BBB, on a grading scale of A+ to F, with 61 complaints filed against them. Of those, 28 complainants are outside of IL. The company has failed to respond to 32 of those complaints. They have 16 negative customer reviews and 1 positive customer review.

[BBB serving Chicago and Northern Illinois first issued a consumer warning regarding a high volume of consumer complaints against First Marshall Auto Auction in 2016.](#) First Marshall Auto Auction failed to address the majority of BBB complaints on file against them and failed to respond to communication requests from BBB.

BBB has an ongoing investigation into the company based on a large number of continuing complaints from consumers who allege issues with product or service, advertising/sales issues and delivery issues.

After the most recent investigation into the company in March 2018, BBB determined First Marshall Auto Auction to have a reoccurring pattern of complaints, as was first reported in 2016 by the BBB.

"Attempts to contact First Marshall Auto Auction to help them alleviate their pattern of complaints have gone unanswered," said Steve Bernas, president and CEO of Better Business Bureau serving Chicago and Northern Illinois. "We now want to alert consumers to the business's marketplace conduct," he added.

Some consumer complaints allege:

- They were charged additional fees, which were not mentioned prior to giving down payment, and increased the total amount due.
- First Marshall Auto Auction failed to disclose their no money back policies.
- They were not allowed to test drive or inspect a car prior to purchase.
- The vehicles First Marshall Auto Auction advertised were not made available to them and they were offered a different vehicle to purchase.
- First Marshall Auto Auction never provided a title for vehicles to be registered.

- They felt intimidated by the security guards at First Marshall Auto Auction and were told they were not allowed to have anyone accompany them into the auction.
- The vehicles purchased were not functional or experienced other mechanical issues that First Marshall Auto Auction declined to address.

Specific comments about First Marshall Auto Auction from complainants to the BBB include:

- *"Bought a car and drove half block and the car died," said Sara S. of Montgomery, IL. "No power, overheated and needed to be towed home. Was not told about the extra fees for the purchase. Bought the car originally for \$1900 after the "fees" final price was \$3122. Car needs major work done before I can drive it."*
- *"I deposited \$600 down on a \$1100 2door 2007 Ford Focus," said Donald M. of Chicago Heights. "Yes, I was Aware of the \$125 auction fee & \$368 for title, plates and registration but NOT aware of all the rest of the hidden fees. I have nowhere near the amount needed to finish purchase. Made numerous calls to contact a manager as the lady at the front desk told me to do. Plus, there's a \$50 a day storage fee I wouldn't have. I'm just getting the run around nobody returned my call. And I just want my refund of \$600 because I was misled..."*
- *"I went to first Marshall auto auction with the intent to purchase a vehicle," said Cortney E. of Park Forest. "I looked at the inventory they had online and found a car that I was interested in. This was the first time I dealt with an auction so when I arrived I had questions. Everyone was telling me to speak with different people. When I spoke with someone by the name of Sam I was told they still had the vehicle I was looking for, because I didn't want to bid he told me that he wouldn't be able to give it to me for the price I saw online he had to charge \$100 more. I was ok with that. I asked him to see the vehicle, he told me before I could see the vehicle I would have to pay \$600 but I'll be able to see it. If I didn't like the car then I can request for a refund. I went to the bank to get the money, after I came back I requested to see the vehicle, he told me again to pay the money and they will let me see it. I paid the money, but wasn't able to see the vehicle. Then I was advised that it was non-refundable. I requested to see the manager and was told he wasn't in, and I would have to come back on Monday. I called the police in the area and was advised that because it was a civil matter, they could not intervene with their policy or demand a refund if the manager wasn't available. I am requesting a complete refund of \$600. The auctioneer was well aware of the policy and failed to inform me that the money was non-refundable and that I would not be able to view the vehicle until Monday. After he took my money, he conveniently left the auction."*

BBB's Ad Review Department also investigated First Marshall Auto Auction's ad practices and determined their television advertising and online advertising may be in conflict with Sections of the Illinois Motor Vehicle Advertising Regulations.

Section 475.250 is meant to prevent a dealer from using confusing or misleading abbreviations, or ones which are not commonly understood by the general public. BBB's Ad Review Department determined that First Marshall Auto Auction's onscreen text in their TV commercials state "Plus T, L, & F" and may be in conflict with this section.

Section 475.310 is regarded as a zero-tolerance issue under the BBB/CATA advertising review program and covers advertised prices. Only tax, title, license, and a single document service fee may be excluded from an advertised price. BBB's Ad Review Department determined First Marshall Auto Auction's disclosure is worded, "Prices exclude ... fees," which may indicate additional fees not permitted in IL.

BBB's Ad Review Department also discovered the company's website states the price for first time buyers only and not for trade ins, which violates Section 475.310 that states an advertised price must be available for all buyers.

In order to comply with IL state law, the BBB requested modification of their advertising, on Feb 7th, Feb 20th, March 27th, and April 3rd of 2018. However, in each instance, the business failed to respond, and failed to implement any changes to address these issues.

As of April 19th, 2018, BBB has not heard back from the company regarding the pattern of consumer allegations. The BBB will continue to monitor complaints, but advises any consumer to be aware of this business and the pattern of consumer allegations.

ABOUT BBB: For more than 100 years, the Better Business Bureau has been helping people find businesses, brands and charities they can trust. In 2017, people turned to BBB more than 160 million times for BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.2 million businesses and Charity Reports on 11,000 charities, all available for free at bbb.org. There are local, independent BBBs across the United States, Canada and Mexico, including BBB Serving Chicago and Northern Illinois which was founded in 1926 and serves counties from Northwest Illinois across the State to Kankakee and all the areas in between.

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